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November 12, 2008

Nearly 10 years ago, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) completed the first Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan, which set the management direction for 2000-2009 by providing specific fisheries goals and strategies on Canyon Ferry, Hauser, and Holter reservoirs and on the Missouri River sections within the system.

The first "Canyon Ferry, Hauser and Holter Fisheries Management Work Group" was appointed in 1998 to help identify fisheries goals to be addressed in a 10-year fisheries management plan.

FWP is now seeking to appoint a similar workgroup to develop recommendations for the state's fish management plan for the upper Missouri River reservoir system. The new workgroup will lead the effort to identify, define, and recommend fish management and regulation approaches on Canyon Ferry, Hauser, and Holter reservoirs and on the Missouri River section below Hauser Dam. The workgroup's recommendations will be considered for the new management plan.

The workgroup will be guided by the following principles:

- The Upper Missouri River angling and recreation community includes warmwater and coldwater anglers, ice-fishing anglers, fisheries managers, outfitters, public-land managers, private landowners, local businesses, local governments, and other interests.
- Montana's fisheries are held in trust by the State of Montana for the enjoyment of all.
- The Upper Missouri River's three reservoir system is to be managed as a high-quality, cost-effective, multi-species fishery with high levels of angler satisfaction.

FWP is seeking a diverse mix of workgroup members to represent organized warmwater and coldwater angling groups, unaffiliated warmwater and coldwater anglers, ice-fishing anglers, kids fishing, conservation-group members, fishing-tournament organizers, local landowners, fishing outfitters, local governments, local businesses, and other interests in the reservoir and river system.

FWP specifically requests that the workgroup address a number of fish-management issues, including use of live bait, stocking of hatchery-raised rainbow trout, regulations in the reservoirs and tailwaters, forage-fish introductions, fishing tournaments, and more.

Nominations must indicate how one's experience fits the workgroup's needed representation mix, the group's purpose, their ability and desire to work in a collaborative process, and their willingness to communicate to constituents during the planning process. Nominees may represent more than one specific group or interest.

The workgroup is expected to meet six to eight times. Meetings will be held periodically throughout 2009 and the effort will culminate in the fall with the FWP Director's initial consideration of the workgroup's proposals and recommendations.

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Nomination forms must be submitted by December 1, 2008 to: Upper Missouri River Management Plan Committee, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; P.O. Box 200701; Helena, MT 59620-0701. E-mail nominations forms are available online at fwp.mt.gov/fishing. Email forms to umrrfmp@mt.gov, appointments of committee members will be announced in mid December.

Thank you for your support and on-going interest in these important issues. FWP looks forward to receiving your nominations.

Sincerely,

M. Jeff Hagener
Director